# STUDY PROJECT





## THE WEU, WHAT POTENTIAL TO REPLACE NATO?

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# THE WEU, WHAT POTENTIAL TO REPLACE NATO?

**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

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## ABSTRACT

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The Western European Union (WEU) has today the legal and political basis necessary to develop the institutional capability to eventually replace NATO as the European regional security organization.

There is currently a debate on what form post cold war European security arrangements will take. There are countervailing forces of, on the one hand, ever increasing domestic pressure in NATO member states to curb defense spending. These forces are balanced by a perceived need by all the nations of the region to sustain the security and stability that has been afforded by that same organization the past half century. The need to create a viable security arrangement for the new Europe is generating changes in both the institutions capable of providing the necessary military power, NATO and the new European Community and its defense arm, the WEU.

NATO has recently redefined its strategic concept. The new concept attempts to accommodate fewer armed forces by creating more political fora capable of creating a secure, stable environment.

The EC has also committed its membership to a political union. As this union matures, it will require a common foreign and security policy. This would entail a commitment to develop a European only security identity. The WEU is the most obvious institution capable of evolving into a force projecting organization capable of protecting European interests.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine the potential of the Western European Union (WEU) to become the future European only, regional defense organization. It will also include an assessment of how a changing NATO may also be able to accommodate the dynamics of change occurring in Europe today.

Present day Europe can be best described in two words--change and uncertainty. The driving force behind the dramatic changes occurring today has been the demise of the Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact. The removal of the preeminent threat to regional security has caused two countervailing forces to work on the prevailing institutions of the region. First, it has provided added impetus to the already maturing West European integration process. This has been manifested primarily as a function of an expanding European Community (EC) now dedicated to political as well as economic union. The significance of this political union is that it will require a common foreign and defense policy representative of a supranational union of regional states.

On the other hand, Eastern Europe has disintegrated as a power projecting block of nation states. These emerging democratic nation states are all facing virtual economic collapse. They are also, for the first time in many decades, going it alone in defining their individual security arrangements.

There is the additional aspect of the destabilizing friction created as the various nation states seek to identify

and secure their best interests. As the plurality of competing interests interject themselves in the process, the ability of each nation state to accommodate domestic change, singularly or in concert with others, has become more difficult.

Europe's focus today is essentially twofold. First, the nations of the region are searching for a security arrangement that will provide the guarantees necessary for regional stability. Second, and of necessity occurring concurrently with the first, is the economic development of the entire region. The influence of the United States in determining or contributing to these goals will be another key aspect in the current and future processes of change in the region.

U.S. interests in European security issues revolve around the perceived need for a continued U.S. presence to maintain regional stability. The key to success in this scenario is a viable Trans-Atlantic link with European allies and an effective security arrangement like that currently existing in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Despite the demise of the Warsaw Pact, there remains considerable residual conventional military capability in the new republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). More importantly, the CIS retains the only strategic nuclear capability that directly threatens the U.S. This is in addition to its residual tactical nuclear capability that still poses a threat to all of Europe.

Any evolving regional security arrangement would focus on deterring war. This conflict prevention aspect of regional security can manifest itself in two institutions that the U.S.

has played key roles in--NATO and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). If U.S. involvement is judged by all affected nations to be essential, it would mean making NATO a viable security guarantor in the new Europe. It is important to note that it is only through this forum that the U.S. exercises direct influence in European affairs. In an attempt to accommodate the evolving security environment in the absence of an immediate, direct threat, NATO has already taken steps to change its strategic concept. The CSCE has also begun to assert its responsibilities as a key element of the evolving security arrangements. It has institutionalized its war deterring capability with the activation of a conflict prevention center in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

However, there is also an increasing momentum towards a European only security arrangement sponsored primarily by the French and Germans. It addresses a growing sensitivity among Europeans that perhaps now is the time to begin to reclaim independence from U.S. leadership in European affairs. The Europeans anticipate the potential to manage their own foreign and security affairs will be commensurate with the increase in the kind of political and economic power represented by a deepening and/or widening EC.

The remaining significant trend is in the arms control and disarmament arena. The evolving institutionalization of the CSCE and its ability to sponsor or mitigate negotiations that could lead to follow on START, ABM, and CFE type treaties begins to address these longer term security interests of the region.

As previously noted, the CSCE is also being developed as a primary conflict prevention center for the nations of the region. This new CSCE will play a role as a non-military (non-force projecting) contributor to regional security concerns. It will act in concert with the force projecting military institutions--NATO and WEU. This paper will focus on examining the potential of these two latter institutions to project the military element of power in the region.

## NATO

Any discussion of the WEU must begin with an examination of NATO's reaction to the changed environment. Although the principal guarantor of regional security for the past forty years, NATO's ability to cope with today's changed environment in Europe is critical to understanding the WEU's future role. NATO, like all other regional institutions, has been working hard to redefine its role in the evolving Europe. With the demise of the Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact, the basic premise for NATO's existence has been fundamentally altered.[1] Now that the west has won the cold war, redefining what regional security means is the essential first step in redefining the future regional security structure. A quick review of the new NATO strategic concept serves to illustrate the nature of the evolving structural changes in the alliance. These changes are designed to build the architecture that can continue to best represent regional security concerns. The new concept also serves to substantiate NATO's continued limitations. First, the

new concept reaffirmed NATO's status as a defensive only alliance designed to protect against a now multi-faceted, multi-directional and unpredictable threat.[2] This new concept ". . . will serve as the political guidance from which the new military strategy, MC 400, would be developed."[3] However, it is seeking to create the institutional mechanisms to increase the potential to politically accommodate security issues. It will provide for crises prevention and management by creating fora for political dialogue and cooperation. "Our security policy can now be based on three mutually reinforcing elements: dialogue, cooperation, and the maintenance of a collective defense capability."[4] It also envisions a "new European security architecture in which NATO, CSCE, the EC, the WEU, and the council of Europe complement each other."[5]

Both the new concept and the recently developed follow on military strategy address the changing regional political and military realities present today. The strategy formally acknowledges this need to ". . . develop a European security identity (ESI) and defense role,"[6] albeit in the context of reinforcing a European pillar within the alliance. This ESI is in the context of accommodating European burden sharing, in part to compensate for a greatly reduced U.S. presence. It does, however, accept the premise of "the parallel emergence and development of a defense component of the European integration process.[7] "We welcome the perspective of a reinforcement of the role of the WEU, both as the defense component of the process of European unification and as a means of strengthening the

European pillar of the alliance . . ."[8] So it is not just an acceptance of greater need of the European allies to share a greater part of the burden vis a vis the U.S., but also an acknowledgement of the emergence of a new European only dynamic at work. There is a perceived need to form a European only arrangement that facilitates their contribution to their own security. More importantly, it acknowledges the economics involved in developing an efficient, coherent European capability to represent its own defense needs in a region no longer threatened by the Warsaw Pact.

At the concept level, the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperative Council provides a formal forum for East European nations to address their security concerns. This institutionalization of both East European liaison elements and collective dialogue at the ministerial level is an attempt to both lay aside the Eastern nations' fears of NATO as a threat to their security and an attempt to provide the fora for addressing the specific security issues involving these emerging democracies.

Finally, in December 1991, the Defense Planning Committee approved NATO's new military strategy, MC-400. It represents a fundamental change to the "flexible response" of the old strategy. It accepts the premise of a graduated approach to security concerns. It begins with crises prevention, follows through crises management to ultimately active defense if all else has failed. It recognizes the changed nature of the threat in that the layer cake defense against overwhelming conventional

forces is no longer necessary. It acknowledges that NATO forces will be smaller, more flexible, and multi-national. Defense will rely on a "forward presence" as opposed to the old "forward defense." This means a greater reliance on augmentation (reserve) forces.[9] This new military strategy is also based on assumptions of a continued Soviet withdrawal and full compliance of the CFE treaty.[10] It also modifies the flexible response strategy to reflect the reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.[11] The new concept reemphasizes the defensive nature of the alliance. This reaffirmation highlights the limitations of NATO in addressing the specific European security issue of how to deal with out-of-sector issues. In this context, out-of-sector is outside Europe.

NATO is the most obvious choice of an institution to define and represent the necessary regional security structure. It is viewed, at least in the short term, as the institution with the greatest potential for accommodating the kind of structured security mechanisms necessary for achieving European security and, thus, stability. It has sought to accommodate popular perception in the West of a significantly reduced threat. NATO has sought a course to restructure and further reduce force levels within the context of continuing to provide the element of military power that guarantees regional security. Moreover, it is continuing to examine its potential for use as a more political institution. Given its current structure, experience, and bureaucratic capability, the member states see no reason NATO would not be able to provide the forum to accommodate the

kinds of control and negotiating apparatus to continue arms control and security measure development necessary for a new and secure Europe. This is certainly the U.S. perspective.[12]

The U.S. concerns about European security are manifested in its positions on how NATO will continue as a stabilizing force in Europe. The same may be said of the other European members. The Germans, for example, have committed considerable resources to the democratization of their five former communist states. They continue to rely on a strong NATO to ensure the stability necessary to bring about a coherent reunification. This includes the institutional limits their membership in NATO puts on any perceived fears their neighbors, east and west, may have of an expansionist Germany planning to dominate Europe. Germany agreed, as part of the reunification accommodations, to reduce the size of its armed forces to 370,000.[13] This represents a significant reduction in capability. Germany sees NATO as essential to the regional security needed to achieve force reductions in all national forces, while continuing to provide the strategic nuclear counter balance to that one continuing CIS threat. Some analysts assert that NATO member states are sensitive that too much change too early is foolhardy when they continue to see a considerable residual conventional capability in the CIS. NATO members' reluctance to change too quickly is based in part on an assessment of Soviet capability, not intent.[14] Even the French agree that a continuing U.S. forward presence and nuclear capability tied to NATO is essential for the immediate future.[15] All members of the western alliance, it

seems, see the best potential for continued European stability and security in the near term defined through NATO, albeit a changed one. The recent changes to NATO's strategic concept and strategy, while acknowledging at least in part the changed environment, represent a near term reaction to accommodate immediate regional security issues.

NATO may be limited by several factors. First, it suffers the legacy, from the European perspective, of forty years of frequent U.S. heavy handedness, albeit effective, in judging European security requirements.[16] Its charter has remained basically unchanged. It may not, however, provide for either specific European only concerns or the long term security of an increasingly interrelated, perhaps even confederated, Europe. There has always been an undercurrent of mistrust between the European members and the U.S. Recent examples serve to illustrate the growing feeling among Europeans that they need to think in terms of providing more and more of their own future security. The Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 was a manifestation of this growing awareness of European for Europeans first. It contributed to the growing momentum to expand the arena of the EC to include more than just economics. More recently, President Bush's decision to unilaterally remove all but a handful of air delivered nuclear weapons from Europe served to again remind the Europeans that they must be cognizant of and react to the U.S. acting in its own best interests. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of growing U.S. disengagement from the security of Europe and U.S. heavy

handedness in dealing with Europe occurred in Munich on 9 February 1992. Speaking at the Conference on Security Policy, Senator William Cohen told European leaders that the "prevailing view in the U.S. is that NATO is no longer necessary, relevant or affordable." Senator Cohen said the alliance will likely become a "mainly European organization."[17] Cohen was one of eleven congressmen attending the conference. The article actually summed up what have become the two most crucial issues related to NATO's changing role in the past cold war era. First, to what extent the U.S. will stay involved militarily in Europe and whether European attitudes toward Washington will change as the U.S. is no longer needed to defend against a Soviet superpower."[18]

The Europeans perceive a compelling near term requirement to build a European defense pillar through a European only institution. It would have as an initial goal easing the U.S. burden by more equitably sharing the cost with the U.S. A longer term objective would be to address European concerns on recourse to military action in out of sector issues. This ability to act in European best interests would add impetus to European initiatives to develop a military planning staff. It would eventually have access to forces with commensurate command and control capability to react as a collective entity. These developments would serve to provide evidence to support the emergence of a potential European only, long term solution to regional security issues that NATO appears reluctant, even unwilling, to accommodate.

## WEU, 1947-1983

Any examination of the WEU's potential to serve as a regional security organization must begin with a review of its legal basis. It must also consider its legacy as an effective security institution. The basis for the WEU was originally set up by the treaty of economic, social, and cultural collaboration and collective self-defense signed in Brussels on 17 March 1948.[19] The so called Brussels Treaty laid down the foundation of a European defense organization designed to fill the void of a post World War II Western Europe that lacked any collective security arrangement. The original five members: the U.K., France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg agreed in the Brussels Treaty to automatic military assistance of one another in any were attacked. This unconditional automatic commitment of their respective forces to threats to any member is important in that it was then, and remains today, far more binding than that of the Atlantic Alliance Treaty. The Atlantic Alliance requires political consultation and collective agreement by all members. The Brussels Treaty was also fundamentally different from NATO in its basic treaty obligations in that it was not restricted to purely military action in defense of the territory of a member state. Rather,

> Article VIII of the treaty sets up a Council so organised as to be able to exercise its functions continuously and deciding by unanimous vote questions for which no other voting procedure has been agreed. The Council's aim is to strengthen peace and European security and also to promote unity and encourage the progressive integration of Europe. At the request of any of the high contracting parties it may be immediately convened to consult "with regard to any

> situation which may constitute a threat to peace, in whatever area this threat should arise, or a danger to economic stability." No limit is placed on the Council's responsibilities and the preamble to the treaty underlines that its aim is to "preserve the principles of democracy, personal freedom and political liberty, the constitutional traditions and the rule of law" and "to strengthen, with these aims in view, the economic, social and cultural ties" uniting the signatory countries. In other words, nothing is outside the responsibilities of WEU.[20]

That part of the above quotation that refers to the treaty obligation to promote unity and encourage the progressive integration of Europe is especially relevant. The treaty has provided from the beginning a legal basis to help serve the integration of Europe. This aspect of the treaty combines with Article XI, "the signatories may decide to invite any other state to accede to the treaty on conditions to be agreed between them and the state so invited,"[21] to create the latitude to accommodate the always evolving nature of European political, economic, and military matters.

The first example of the capability of the WEU as an organization was its actual creation in 1954. The U.S. call in 1950 for a European defense arrangement that included the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) led to the proposed European Defense Community (EDC) of 1952. The EDC consisted of the six countries that had recently formed the European Coal and Steel Community: Belgium, France, Italy, FRG, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. However, the EDC was rejected in 1954 by the French parliament. That left the original five WEU members and the FRG and Italy to look to the Brussels Treaty for another way to include the former Axis powers in a West European collective

defense organization. This was accomplished by the seven nations signing the Paris agreement of 1954. This agreement contained four protocols that provided assurances against fears of a military revitalization of the FRG by controlling its rearmament.[22] Protocol No. 1 modified the Brussels Treaty so that it provided legal credibility to the notion that "Europe's unity and security to be closely linked, as well as its economy and defense."[23] The framework of the WEU was constructed to "facilitate armaments cooperation and establish mutual confidence which . . . implied collective control of levels of forces and armaments."[24] Protocols Nos. II, III, and IV contained other, more specific, provisions of force levels and armaments control of all member countries. The enforcement of the protocols of the modified Brussels Treaty was the first accomplishment of the WEU. Both the ACA and the Standing Armaments Committee, the latter devoted to promoting joint productions of armaments, are excellent early examples of freely accepted cooperation in Arms Control by a "group of states with equal rights."[25]

Article VIII of the modified Brussels Treaty also created the WEU Council that was to meet at ministerial level twice a year. A permanent council composed of deputy ministers meets continuously at the seat of the organization in London. This permanent council satisfies the requirement that it must be able to meet its functions continuously, although its responsibilities are limited. They include the review of the work of the organization and preparations for ministerial

meetings. What was most significant about the Council at that time, however, was its status as the only forum where both foreign and defense ministers of member nations met on a regular basis.[26] The modified Brussels Treaty also created an Assembly that sits in permanent session in Paris. Proportional representation based on the population of each member state reviews activities of the Council, carries out studies of specific issues identified by itself or the Council and, finally, makes recommendations to the Council in periodic reports.

The modified Brussels Treaty was, however, also responsible for limiting its own activities from the late 50's to its revitalization in the mid 80's. "Article IV of the treaty stipulated that the signatory countries and any organs established by them 'shall work in close cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization' and recognized 'the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO.'"[27] The exercise of the WEU Council's strictly military responsibilities was transferred to NATO virtually from the WEU's beginnings. The same reluctance to duplicate effort led the WEU Council to transfer in 1960 the exercise of the bulk of social and cultural responsibilities, based on the modified BTO articles II and II, to the Council of Europe.

The Assembly has not fully supported the Council's actions to reduce the scope of its work in the 60's and 70's in favor of NATO, CE, ED, and a future European union. Rather, "it has been the Assembly's conviction that the modified BTO was and remains

an important means for achieving a European union."[28] However, this did not have much effect during this period.

The initial achievements of the WEU included providing the means that allowed the FRG and Italy to join NATO, settling the post war Franco-German dispute of control of the Saar region, and serving as a vital link between the U.K. and the evolving EEC until the U.K. accession to membership in 1973. However, the modified Brussels Treaty Organization still provides both the legal and institutional legitimacy for the development of a European only security arrangement. It promotes, by treaty, the kind of mutually supportive confidence building and military cooperation that can serve as a confederated European defense pillar. Its early history, however, is characterized mainly as a facilitator of change, taking form only long enough to transfer real authority to other institutions. This has resulted in bodies of politicians, the Council and Assembly, that have not built the kind of institutional mechanisms that act out their respective bidding. It has lacked the political commitment of its members to develop the kind of military planning and operational staffs as well as the integrated forces necessary to build a legacy of competence in dealing with defense issues. Most of all, it has lacked the political commitment so necessary to develop a collective defense policy of its member states as well as that of the EC.

## WEU REEMERGENCE, 1984-1989

The WEU was reactivated largely as a result of a number of unilateral decisions by the U.S. The first was in 1983, with President Reagan's unilateral decision to "cover the U.S. territory with an anti-missile space shield called the 'Strategic Defense Initiative.'"[29] This initiative intensified old European fears about the U.S. commitment to Europe in the event of a future major conflict. It also increased the old American urgings of Europe to increase their own (European) defense effort, i.e., burden-sharing. From the European perspective, it also added impetus to a growing desire to have more say in the Atlantic Alliance, to have more influence in East-West relations, and to have a bigger share of supplying armaments to members of the alliance.

In this new environment, France proposed in February 1984 a series of definitive proposals to reinvigorate the WEU. A series of ministerial council meetings took place in the next year to legitimize the new direction and influence of the WEU. In October 1984, the fourteen Council Ministers of the seven nations adopted the ROME declaration that directed two initiatives. First, it outlined political aims of the WEU and, second, specified, in writing, institutional reforms required to accommodate the changing environment of Europe.[30] Both initiatives, in effect, served to reinvigorate the union by asserting its utility in creating a viable "European Pillar" within the Atlantic Alliance ". . . to make better use of the

WEU framework in order to increase co-operation between the member states in the field of security policy to encourage consensus." Moreover, "the need to make the best use, especially in the Atlantic framework, of existing resources through increased co-operation, and through WEU to provide a political impetus to institutions of co-operation in the field of armaments."[31] This would best be accomplished by discussing,

> defense questions; arms control and disarmament; the effects of developments in East-West relations on the security of Europe; Europe's contribution to the strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance, bearing in mind the importance of transatlantic relations; the development of European co-operation in the field of armaments in respect of which WEU can provide a political impetus.
>
> The Council may also consider the implications for Europe of crises in other regions of the world. . . . [And finally, reaffirming] the WEU Assembly . . . as the only European parliamentary body mandated by treaty to discuss defence matters, is called upon to play a growing role.
>
> One tangible result of the decisions taken in Rome is that since 1985 the WEU Council again meets regularly twice a year at ministerial level. These meetings include both defence and foreign affairs ministers, sometimes separately, sometimes together. It is important to note that there is no other European or Atlantic forum in which these ministers are required to meet together. Thus the Council has finally followed up the many recommendations of the Assembly steadfastly asking for defence ministers to take part in the Council's work.[32]

The institutional restructuring also sponsored by the Rome declaration has had the most practical benefit to the institutional effectiveness of the Union. It created three new agencies for security questions,

> an agency for the study of arms control and disarmament questions (Agency I); an agency for the study of security and defence questions (Agency II); and an agency for the development of co-operation in the field of armaments (Agency III).

> As from 1st January 1986 the three newly-created agencies for security questions carried out the tasks assigned to them in assisting the Council and conducting studies at its request. In 1988, these studies and contributions were concentrated on the verification aspects of conventional arms control, threat assessment, resource management, logistics and training, armaments co-operation and defence technologies.[33]

The utility of the permanent council has been subsequently enhanced by the addition of two special working groups. The first group was to address issues specific to SDI. The second, a defense representative group, addresses any other issues involved with security. Each showed a growing commitment by the members to address the kinds of issues that are key to future European security arrangements. The three Paris-based agencies were merged under the agreement reached at a ministerial meeting in the Hague in October 1987. The new single unit came under the direct authority of the enlarged Secretary General. At this same meeting, the ministers directed that all WEU ministerial organs would locate in one capital. The decision on which capital this should be remains unresolved. These changes, called The Hague Platform of 1987, represented an ever increasing European concern with unilateral U.S. actions following the 1983 SDI initiative. The combination of the U.S.-Soviet agreement banning their respective INF and increasing U.S. congressional pressure to reduce U.S. troop levels in Europe compelled the Europeans to create this Hague Platform, an intent by the WEU members

> to develop a more cohesive European identity [in defense matters] as a means to "enhance the European role in the Alliance and ensure the basis for a balanced partnership across the Atlantic." The revitalization of the WEU was

presented as "an important contribution to the broader process of European Unification."[34]

The Rome declaration of 1984 generated the momentum that carried the WEU to the forefront of the evolving European security concerns. The Hague initiative of 1987 showed a maturing capability to accommodate the changing security needs of the European nations. There have been an increasing number of other events and decisions that have continued to generate the kind of momentum needed to further develop the WEU as a truly competent, European security institution.

Practically speaking, the WEU sponsored participation of member states' naval forces in Persian Gulf mine clearing operations in 1987 was a dramatic step in providing a forum for consensus action in the other critical aspect of European security affairs, out-of-sector operations. NATO was hamstrung by its Charter limitations that preclude such out-of-sector activities. The Dutch, French, British, Italians, and Belgians sent ships to the area while Germany sent ships to the Mediterranean to relieve those allies forces assigned to the Gulf, and Luxembourg made a financial contribution.[35] This action is especially important in that it represents a clear willingness and institutional capability for the Europeans to act together in concert with one another to meet "modified Brussels Treaty obligations with regard to any situation which may constitute a threat to peace, in whatever area (of the world) this threat should arise."[36] It paved the way for a larger involvement in the military enforcement of the embargo

against Iraq in 1990.[37] These two examples are empirical evidence of the WEU's ability to foster coordinated military action in the union.

The other significant event that closely followed the activities of 1987 was the enlargement of the Union to include Spain and Portugal. Agreed to in November 1988 by the Council and subsequently in each new member's parliament in March 1990, the accession of these two NATO and EC members created a Union of nine members.

To briefly summarize, the period of 1984 to 1989 represented the virtual rebirth of the WEU. The Rome Declaration of 1984 and the subsequent reforms of the Hague Platform of 1987 constitute relevant building blocks of evolutionary change for the WEU. They represent useful fora where a "European Pillar" of member states could act in concert on security issues, albeit still in the context of the Atlantic Alliance. It also provided the institutional framework for study and consultation that created consensus among its European members. It represented the first coordinated, cooperative military action in an area outside Europe that represented critical interests of the European members outside the purview of NATO's sphere of influence. It also manifested its ability to change to the requirements of its environment by allowing two new members, Spain and Portugal, to join as full members. Lastly, it consciously reiterated dedication to "retain in full the preamble and Articles I, II and III which make the WEU an essential factor in the establishment of a European union."[38]

## WEU, 1990-PRESENT

The past two years have had the most profound effect on the WEU. The European environment has been dramatically and irrevocably changed. The whole nature of security has been altered with the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Cold War. The European nations' search for new and meaningful security arrangements is, more than ever, dependent on their ability to define and represent their own best interests. As we have previously discussed, the threats facing Europe are now multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, unlike the earlier Soviet threat from the East. The confusion caused by the unstable nature of the political, economic, and military environment in Europe is exacerbated on the one hand by the withdrawal of significant numbers of U.S. conventional forces from Europe. On the other hand, Germany has reunified, accompanied by all the concerns of its neighbors, east and west, as to how the economically most powerful state in the region will evolve in the future. The very future of NATO is in question, especially its long term utility. Speaking at the annual Munich Conference on Security Policy, Senator William Cohen (Republican-Maine) said (as noted previously) the "prevailing view" in the United States is that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization "is no longer necessary, relevant or affordable." He said the alliance will likely become a "mainly European organization."[39] This kind of rhetoric has tended to add impetus to the European's feeling that they must more and more rely on themselves to provide their

own security vis a vis their traditional reliance on U.S. leadership and wherewithal to protect their best interests economically, politically, and militarily. The linkage of economics to security has also been made:

> The warnings of a dramatically reduced U.S. presence in Europe came as Vice President Quayle led a concerted U.S. drive to persuade European allies that no issue is more important in the Atlantic alliance than achieving tariff reductions under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The lengthy current round of talks has been stymied by a U.S.-European Community stalemate over agricultural subsidies. "Friends, we have got to get on with it," Quayle told the conference. "Trade is a security issue."[40]

These past two years have seen the future of the WEU increasingly tied to the development of the EC as an institution dedicated to the region in all aspects of European life. Since its inception in 1957, the EC has always kept security matters at arms length. Given the success of NATO, this is no great surprise. Although the Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 committed the EC members to further integration, it addressed security only in terms of "coordinating political and economic aspects of security."[41] But the end of the cold war has changed all that.

While all EC member nations agreed that greater European integration was inevitable, its impact on the WEU was open to question. Since the new impetus for a more complete European integration, "security integration is now an important issue in all discussions of its future development."[42] Some members of the WEU (France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Greece, the newest member, ascending to full membership in 1992), advocate

a direct linkage between the EC as the political force behind a future confederated Europe, and the WEU as the defense dimension of its security policy. The vital first step in this relationship would be to establish a treaty link between the two:

> This would be fully consistent with the reference to the European integration process made in all major WEU documents, from its founding 1954 modified Brussels Treaty to the 1988 Protocols of Accession of Spain and Portugal. To that end, the Genscher-Dumas proposal of February 4, 1991, professes that: The work of WEU should be organized in order to establish organizational relations between Political Union and WEU, thus enabling the WEU, with a view to being part of Political Union in course, to progressively develop the European common security policy on behalf of the Union.[43]

This relationship, however, is necessarily dependent on the EC developing sufficient political cohesion. However, in early 1991 the foreign and defense ministers agreed in principle that "it was desirable to develop an organic relationship between WEU and Political Union in order to make more visible the long term commitment to a European Union including a defense dimension." Further, "the decisions of the European Council on the principles and orientations of the Common Foreign and Security Policy should serve as a guideline for cooperation under the Brussels Treaty."[44] This course of action views the WEU surviving as a subordinate part of a greater EC institutional entity.

Britain and the Netherlands would rather leave the future WEU more as a bridge between the EC and NATO. The WEU would represent the European Pillar of NATO. This view is obviously

supported by the U.S. as well as non WEU NATO members Norway and Turkey. The following excerpt puts the debate in perspective:

> The draft treaty submitted by the Luxembourg presidency to the EC Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union on April 12, 1991, goes further in an attempt to find the expression of an acceptable compromise. It suggests that "the Union's decisions regarding security which have implications for defense can be fully or partially implemented within the framework of the WEU," and provides that the new treaty will be accompanied by a general political declaration of the WEU governments stating their intention to cooperate with the European Union, and by a document spelling out concrete steps for coordination. It carefully leaves between brackets the prospect of a future common defense policy and the commitment to review the relationship between the WEU and the Union by 1996.[45]

While the resolution of this debate is important to the long term development of the WEU, there are other variables at work. The first includes the initiative in 1990 by the WEU Secretary General van Eckelen to form a European multi-national force. Briefly, this European rapid reaction force made up of WEU member forces, coordinated with NATO, could operate under three different commands depending on the situation. These triple-"hatted" forces could operate under NATO, WEU, or their national commands, not unlike current NATO forces. This desire to create a European only force has gained considerable credibility of late with a similar, bilateral German-French proposal in October of 1991 that called for, among other things, forming a multi-national army corps of 70,000 men.[46] There was subsequently an open invitation for any other WEU member to contribute forces to this corps. This German-French initiative action represents an attempt to create a military capability outside that of the integrated command and control of NATO. It

has since been endorsed by all members.[47] Also, in June 1991, the WEU Assembly's Technological and Aerospace subcommittee recommended the creation of an all-European air lift command to pool and enhance the limited resources of the member nations.[48]

What these latter two initiatives demonstrate is a capability to project armed forces. It represents a capability beyond just studying security problems and providing recommendations to member's national parliaments for action. The point to be made is that the WEU has begun to create the kind of institutional expertise necessary to carry out its broadened areas of responsibility. This growing capability is manifested in the July 1990 activation of a WEU Institute for Security Studies. It is designed to "promote a European Security Identity and to assist WEU in pursuing the objectives laid down in the platform on European security interests adopted in the Hague on 26th October 1987."[49] The institute is under the direct authority of the Council. The WEU has also proposed moving the WEU Permanent Council to Brussels and "having it composed of the permanent representatives of member countries to the EC and NATO.[50] This would help solve the problem of the potential duplication of ministers and certainly facilitate the coherence and coordination of security issues among the EC-WEU-NATO triumvirate.

The members' defense chiefs, who met during the Gulf War to coordinate the European contribution, decided to continue to meet regularly to "prepare the possible coordination of the action of their countries forces should it be necessary."[51]

The changes in 1991 represent the clearest indication of the WEU's growing capability to represent European security interests. The Franco-German Corps, initial efforts at a common "force lift" capability, and proven coordinated naval action provide evidence of a growing European only capability. When the above factors combine with the continued development and refinement of institutional mechanisms, it develops an empirical basis that substantiates the view that the WEU continues to grow as a competent representation of its members' best interests. The legacy of the WEU as "everybody's favorite institution in theory, but not in practice"[52] may be changing.

These recent initiatives represent the beginning of what has now become an official, legal, treaty obligation to expand the WEU's capability to represent European security interests. This final, necessary political support of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) was agreed to at the Maastricht Summit of the EC in December 1991. The Maastricht Treaty on European Economic and Political Union focused on creating a Common Foreign and Security Policy "that will allow the EC member states to maintain a defense role for the first time."[53] The Maastricht Treaty formally established "the WEU as the Community's defense arm and directs it be developed as the defense component of the 'European Union.'"[54] The new defense alliance will open itself to all EC members. It makes Turkey an associate member, with a leg up to become the 11th member after Greece's formal accession to full member status at the end of 1992.

> The WEU will be an integral part of the development of the European Union which will be able to "request" the WEU "to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defense implications." The WEU and EC Council of Ministers' secretaries will cooperate closely on defense and security matters, and strenuous efforts will be made to synchronize meetings of the two organizations.
>
> CFSP will be set through consultation of individual nations' officials but can be implemented only through unanimous vote. The EC hopes that through CFSP it can act as one unified body to address and respond to international security issues.[55]

The WEU has already begun the process of trying to accommodate former eastern bloc countries. It is forming a council for consultations with states of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Baltics and USSR.[56] It will meet annually at the ministerial level to discuss issues of security with all attendees. The WEU has also created, for the first time, a resident military planning staff, located exactly next door to NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Albeit small (10-15 officers) and limited to out-of-sector issues for now, it represents a first ever attempt to execute ministerial guidance in military matters.[57] It now appears that the WEU has gained formal acceptance as part of the European unification process. It transcends its earlier role as merely the "European Pillar" only in the context of a continuing NATO dominated security arrangement. Moreover, it also goes beyond the more recent role as an alternative to a treaty limited NATO for Europeans to deal with out-of-sector issues. Even the German-French perspective of the WEU as an arbiter in former East European regional security matters is a now too limited perspective of what the WEU's new charter encompasses.

No one, however, believes this is a short term proposition. The intricacies of building an effective multi-national corps requires time. Providing for a European controlled satellite intelligence capability will also be key, as will members' committing monies necessary to develop strategic lift capability. The institutional mechanisms necessary to develop a more efficient crises action process as well as a command and control capability will also take time. The question of the status of heretofore neutrals in the EC, like current member Ireland, and soon to be members Austria and Sweden, requires serious consideration to affect the kind of compromise necessary for these countries to ascend to WEU membership. Of course, the question of former Eastern Bloc nations will also be critical to the long term viability of the Union.

## CONCLUSION

This examination of the WEU has provided empirical evidence that it does have the potential to develop as a European only defense institution. The EC has given it the one essential ingredient necessary for any successful collective security arrangement: political consensus of its members. Moreover, since 1984, the WEU has begun to develop the institutional mechanisms necessary to project military power. However, the realization of this potential as a European only security institution will probably be in direct proportion to the success of the EC as an economic and political union of regional nation states. Only a truly confederated Europe can override the

restrictions imposed by the traditional processes of national sovereignty on defense issues. It would take a truly integrated Europe to overcome the recent reliance on the super power of the U.S. to guarantee its security. The critical litmus test will be the success of the EC in establishing the first tier of a truly integrated Europe. That the Europeans could and should express their opinions in ways that are commensurate with their means without the traditional reliance on superpower acquiescence is reasonable. Too, the uncertainty of what the former Soviet Union will evolve into and the position it will take in regional security issues will also play a significant role in what regional security structure develops. Future force reductions by the U.S. and arms control and disarmament agreements will also be key variables in the evolution of the region's future security arrangement.

It appears from this overview of the security concerns facing a post cold war Europe that NATO is best prepared to continue the momentum of peaceful change in the region in the short term. It is the sole remaining organization capable of leveraging the military capabilities of forces influencing European security and stability in the critical near term. It is also de facto recognition of the U.S. position as the remaining superpower and principal nuclear deterrent. It is critical to the near term stability sought by the nations of the region. If the U.S. continues to consider it essential to play an integral and direct role in the region's security in the more distant future, and this is by no means certain, the

aforementioned revamped NATO offers the most potential for the longer term evolution of both U.S. and European security. Even if the Europeans agree with continued U.S. participation, the new NATO will probably reflect a growing influence by European members, more on a par with the U.S. than their roles today.

Be that as it may, the WEU has now been imbued with the legal, entreatied support necessary for it to develop into a viable alternative to NATO. It has the potential of allowing the evolution of a European only perspective on both regional and global security issues. As part of a Pan-European confederation and in league with the EC exercising regional political and economic elements of power, the WEU could evolve as the regional instrument of the military element of power.

## ENDNOTES

1. Robert Ulin, "Recent Key Documents on European Security," Strategic Studies Institute, USAWC, 1992, 13. The summary and comments offered by the author are designed to represent the more germane aspects of the subject documents that are reproduced in their entirety as part of the ULIN document.

2. Ibid., 23.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 31.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 34.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 7. Represents a paraphrased summary.

10. Peter Corterier, "Transforming the Atlantic Alliance," The Washington Quarterly (Winter 1991), 32.

11. Ibid., 33.

12. Catherine Guicherd, "A European Defense Identity: Challenge and Opportunity for NATO," CRS Report for Congress, 12 June 1991, 56.

13. Robert H. Levine, "A European Security in the 1990's: Uncertain Prospects and Prudent Policies," A Rand Note, 1991, 17.

14. Brain Kenny, "A NATO Vehicle for the Road Ahead," Parameters (Autumn 1991), 21.

15. Ibid., 25.

16. Guicherd, 58, 71.

17. Marc Fisher, Washington Post, 10 February 1991, A1.

18. Ibid.

19. Tummers, "Western European Union," Information Report, Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations, 11 April 1990, 9.

20. Ibid., 12.

21. Ibid., 13.

22. Ibid., 11.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 13.

26. Ibid., 19.

27. Ibid., 14.

28. Ibid., 15.

29. Ibid., 16.

30. Ibid., 18.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 19.

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35. Ibid., 72.

36. Tummers, 23.

37. Guicherd, 72.

38. Tummers, 24.

39. Fisher, 1.

40. Ibid.

41. Ian Gambles, "European Security Integration in the 1990's," Chaillot Papers, Institute for Security Studies, WEU, November, 1991, 24.

42. Ibid.

43. Guicherd, 33-34.

44. Ibid., 34.

45. Ibid.

46. Robert Pontillon, "Letter from the Assembly," Information Letter, from the Assembly of Western European Union, No. 9 - December 1991, 4.

47. Ibid.

48. Dov Zakheim, "An Old Alliance Comes to Life," Proceedings, December 1991, 70.

49. Tummers, 30.

50. Pontillon, 3.

51. Ibid., 5.

52. Zakheim, 68.

53. Jacqueline Merl, "Current European Developments," Special Report - European Political Union - Maastricht Treaty, No. IVI, 10 January 1992, 1.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. "WEU Wants to Extend Political Link with East," FBIS, 19 November 1991, 1.

57. Col. Bernd Mueller, Military Attache, Embassy of the FRG, Washington, D.C., 7 February 1992. Response to a question by author.

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